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FOR IO/EDA CHARLES CHANG AND NEA/IR VICTORIA TAYLOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2019
TAGS: [PREF](#) [IR](#) [UN](#) [EAID](#) [NO](#)
SUBJECT: NORWAY REFUSES TO OPPOSE IRANIAN PRESIDENCY OF
UNDP EXECUTIVE BOARD

REF: STATE 1500

Classified By: Political Counselor Kristen Bauer for reasons 1.4(b) and
(d)

¶1. (C) Poloff spoke re reftel with Lars Henie, Deputy Section Head of the UN section of the MFA. Henie had been "expecting" poloff's call on this, and had been "coordinating and clarifying" a response to our expected request for cooperation. Henie had the following to say:

--The GON "does not oppose" an Iranian presidency.
--If a vote is called, Norway will abstain.
--Norway views the presidency of the executive board of the UNDP as "a ceremonial, and not a political position."
--Norway does not believe that an Iranian presidency would politicize the UNDP, and believes Iranian diplomats have acted professionally when put in other ceremonial UN posts similar to this one.
--Norway "will do everything it can" to avoid a vote; Norway believes a consensus decision is much preferable to a vote.
--Norway believes a vote will "politicize" the presidency, and would be "damaging."

¶2. (C) Henie knew that the GON position would be at odds with the U.S. and hence had taken the effort to be fully prepared for our call. We stressed that we believe that an Iran presidency would be politically polarizing even without a vote, and it would reward a pariah state that violates international norms.
WHITNEY